

REMARKS

Reopen prosecution and reconsideration of the application are requested.

Claims 3, 5-13, 15-17, and 20-26 are now in the application. Claims 3, 5-6, 8-13, 15-17, 24, and 26 have been amended. Claims 1-2, 4, 14, and 18-19 have been canceled to facilitate prosecution of the instant application.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the withdrawal of the rejections in connection with Koguchi.

In the *Decision on Request for Rehearing*, claims 1, 4, 14-17, 19, and 26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Nüssel.

Claims 1, 4, 14, and 19 have been cancelled. Claims 16-17 and 26 have been amended to recite a liquid clearing medium instead of a fluid clearing medium. Claim 15 has been amended to be dependent on claim 3 instead of claim 1.

Since Nüssel only discloses gas as the clearing medium, claims 3, 5-13, 15-17, and 20-26 are now believed to be in condition for allowance because claims 3, 5-13, 15-17, and 20-26 only recite liquid as the clearing medium.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 3, 5-13, 15-17, and 20-26 are solicited.

Appl. No. 09/923,696  
Amdt. dated 4/13/09  
Reply to Office action of 2/11/09

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate receiving a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

Please charge any fees that might be due to Deposit Account Number 12-1099 of Lerner Greenberg Sterner LLP.

Respectfully submitted,

/Laurence A. Greenberg/  
Laurence A. Greenberg  
Reg. No. 29308

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Lerner Greenberg Sterner LLP  
P.O. Box 2480  
Hollywood, Florida 33022-2480  
Tel.: (954) 925-1100  
Fax: (954) 925-1101

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